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Lesson 4: Developing an Effective M&E Plan



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Objectives

1. To understand the **role of the M&E Plan**
2. To be able to **plan and organize an effective process**
3. To provide **tools and templates** for M&E development



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Underlying Principles

- Good performance management starts with a good strategy
- Participation and consensus building is essential
- Streamline and focus the system (use a “management” point of view)
- Use the data (what does that mean?)
- Encourage transparency and learning



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What is an M&E Plan?

- A **plan** to help managers set up and manage the process of monitoring, analyzing, evaluating, and reporting progress toward achieving key objectives.
- Shifts the focus to a higher level than activities or implementing mechanisms alone
- Serves to measure **progress** toward planned results
- Identifies evaluation questions
- Framework for ensuring data **comparability** over time and across project sites
- Identifies **details** (who, what, how, when, and where....)
- Strengthen the evidentiary base for programming

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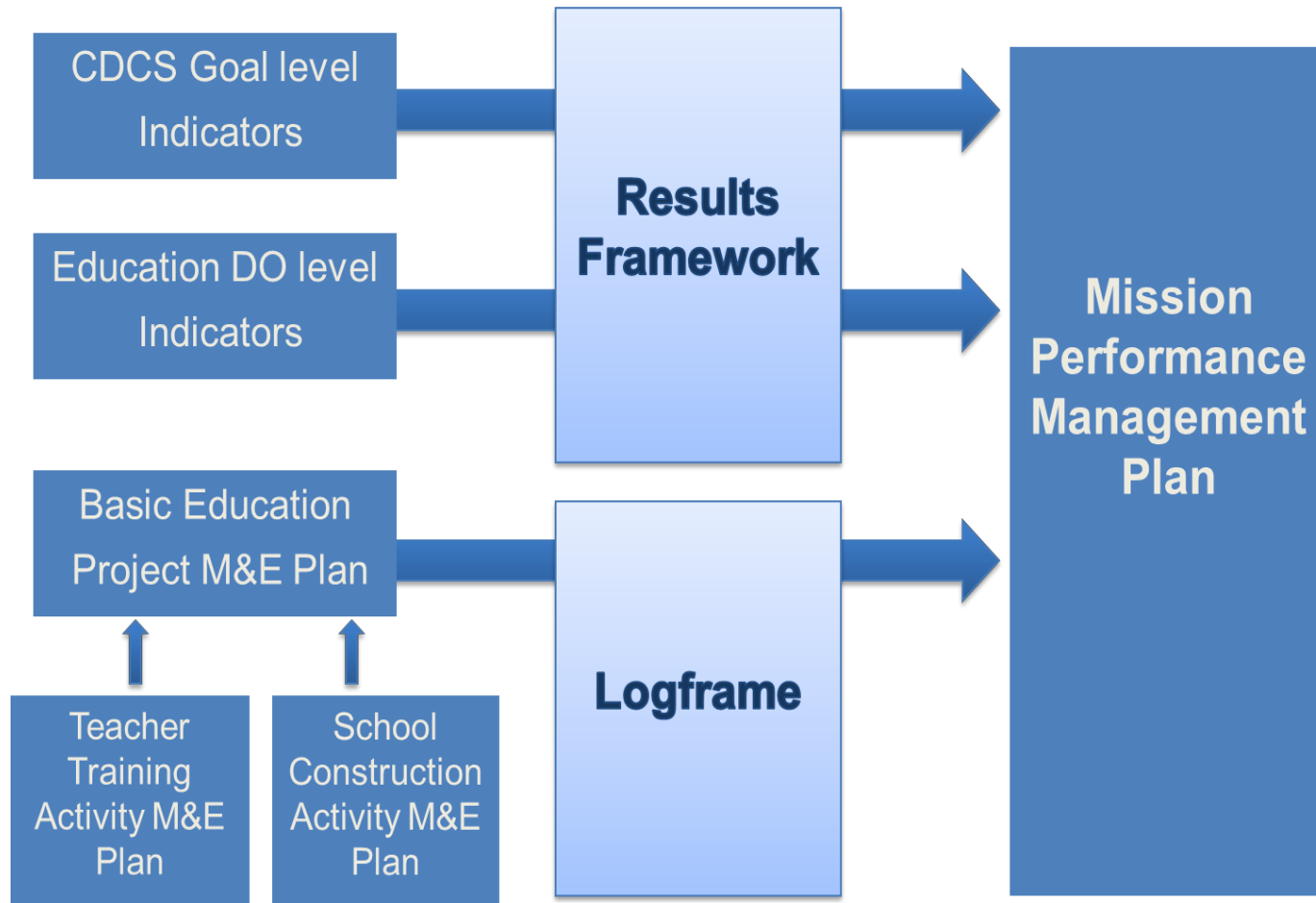
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The Monitoring Portion of the M&E Plan Includes:

- Indicators with precise definitions
- Rationale for selecting indicators (the thinking behind the indicator choice)
- Data sources and methodology for data collection
- Baselines and Targets
- Data limitations and how limitations will be addressed
- Critical assumptions
- Responsible Individuals



Linkage between RF, Logframe & PMP

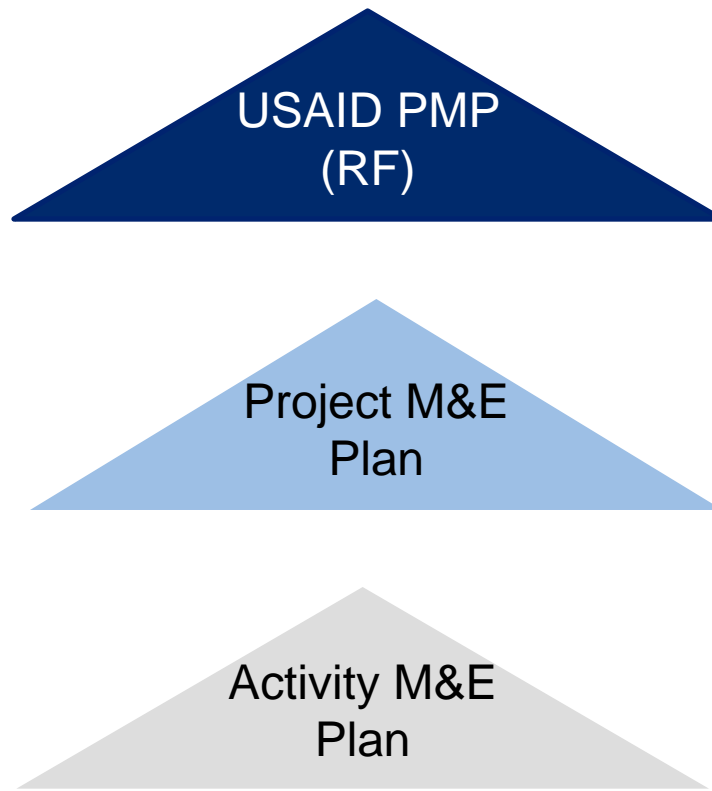




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Program, Project and Activity – How Does it Fit?

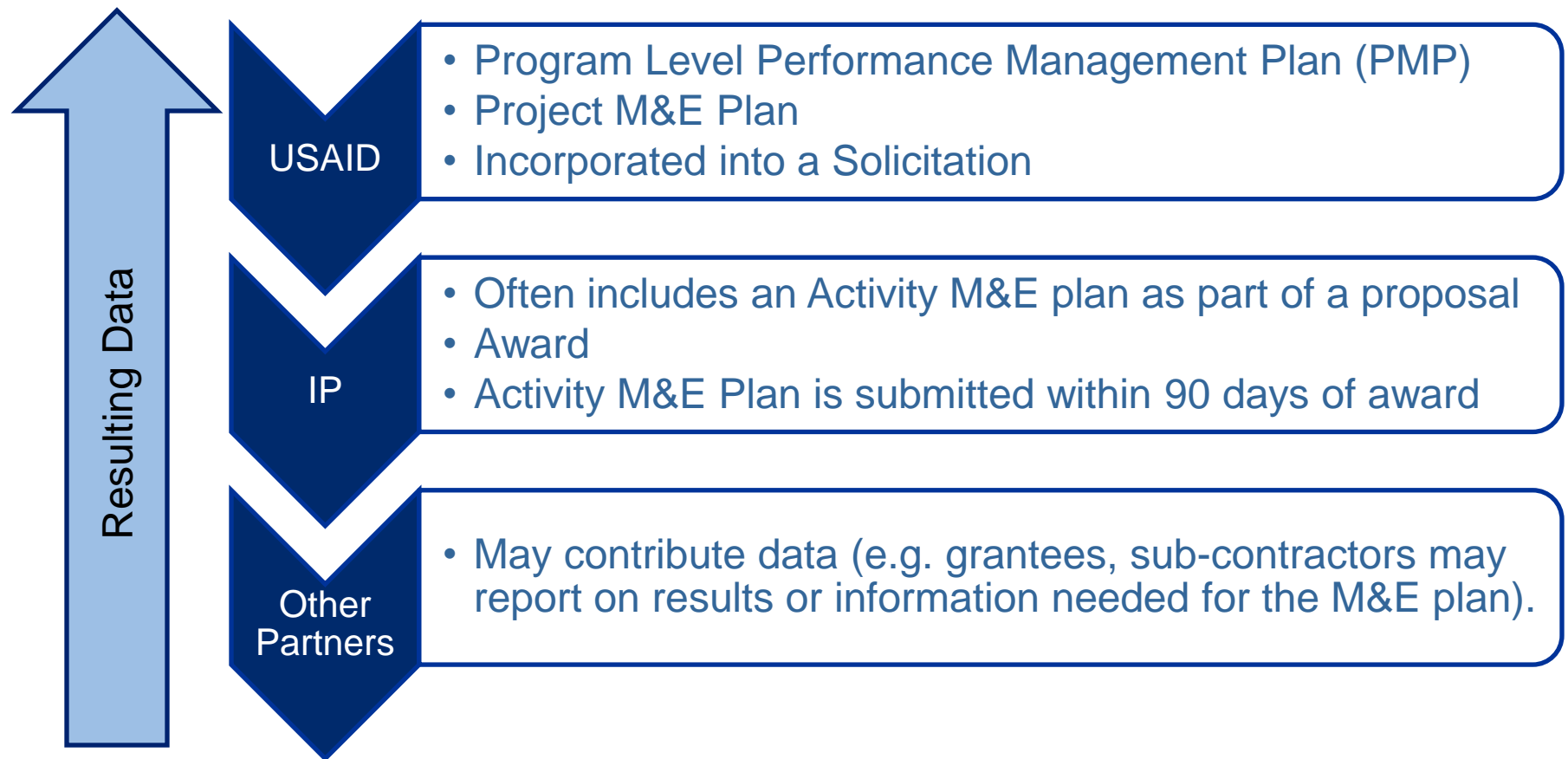




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Project Level M&E- Where It Is Addressed





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The Evaluation Portion of the M&E Plan

At the Activity Level

- Have a smaller role— first look to USAID's **project** M&E plan and how that impacts your activity
- M&E plan development is iterative— what you learn at the activity level can/ should inform the project's M&E plan and the PMP
- Should be consultation and engagement on evaluation questions
- Management driven evaluation (e.g. examining issues that may emerge, including unanticipated issues)



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What Has Changed?

- USAID project design process **requires a logframe and a project level M&E plan**
- Requirements will be more explicit in contracts (e.g. around issues like coordination around indicators that are aggregated)
- **Evaluation** has greater emphasis



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Key Requirements for IPs

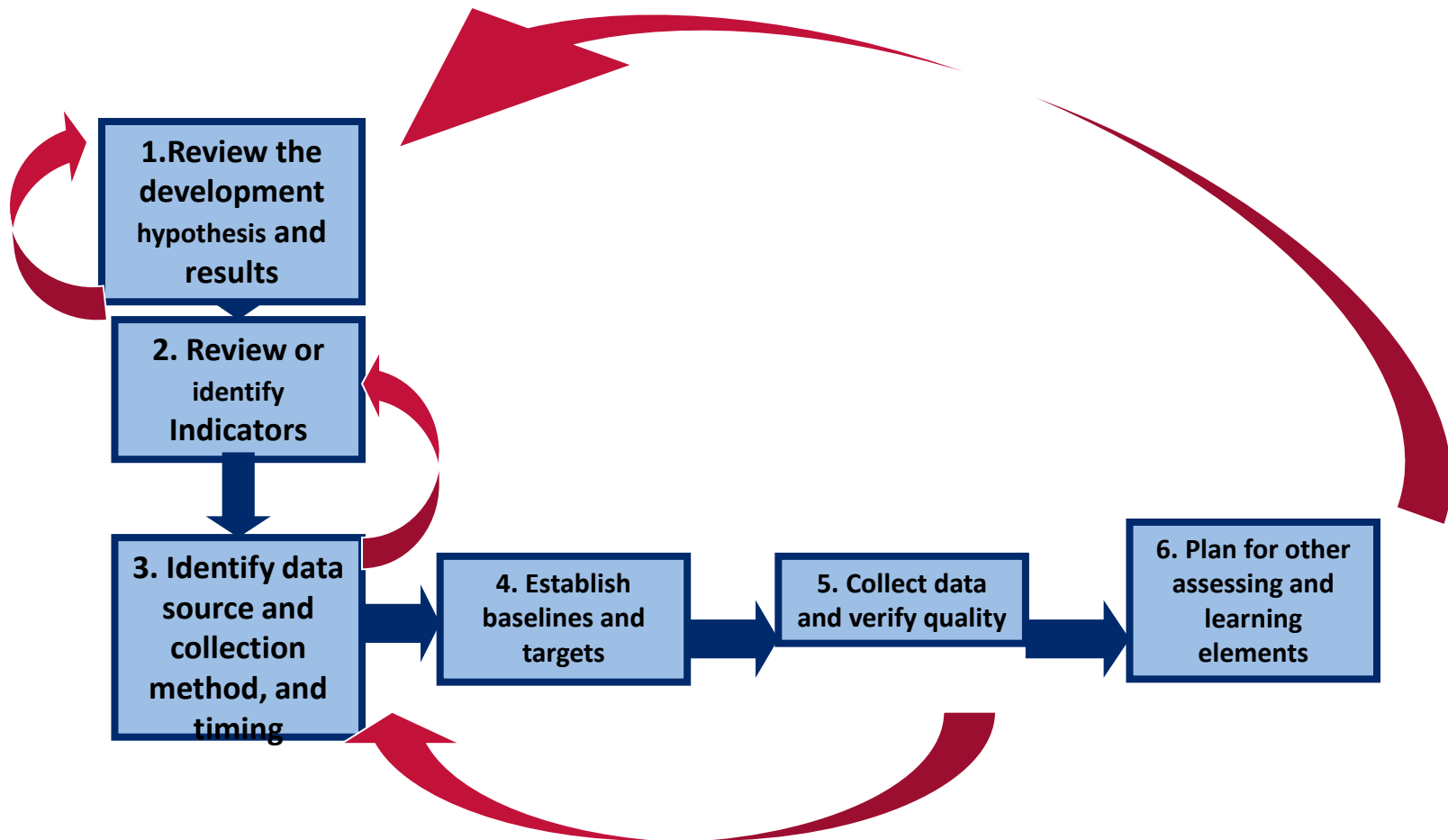
- Submit Activity M&E plan within **90 days of award**
- **Only include indicators that meet the needs of the project M&E plan and the Mission's PMP (NOT the entire set of indicators that the implementer uses for activity management)**
- Solicitations should **include instructions** to offerors / applicants including costs of data collection, analysis and reporting as a separate line item in the budget to ensure adequate resources
- Monitoring should track unintended consequences (e.g. affecting safety of beneficiaries or equitable access)
- Work with COR /AOR to ensure USAID data needs are met



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The Process for Developing/ Updating the M&E Plan





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Step 1: Review the Development Hypothesis and Results Statements

- Step back and consider the larger picture of what constitutes project success and impact
- What results are really being sought
- Verify link between chosen indicators and their ability to express progress toward meeting the result
- Identify larger potential evaluation questions



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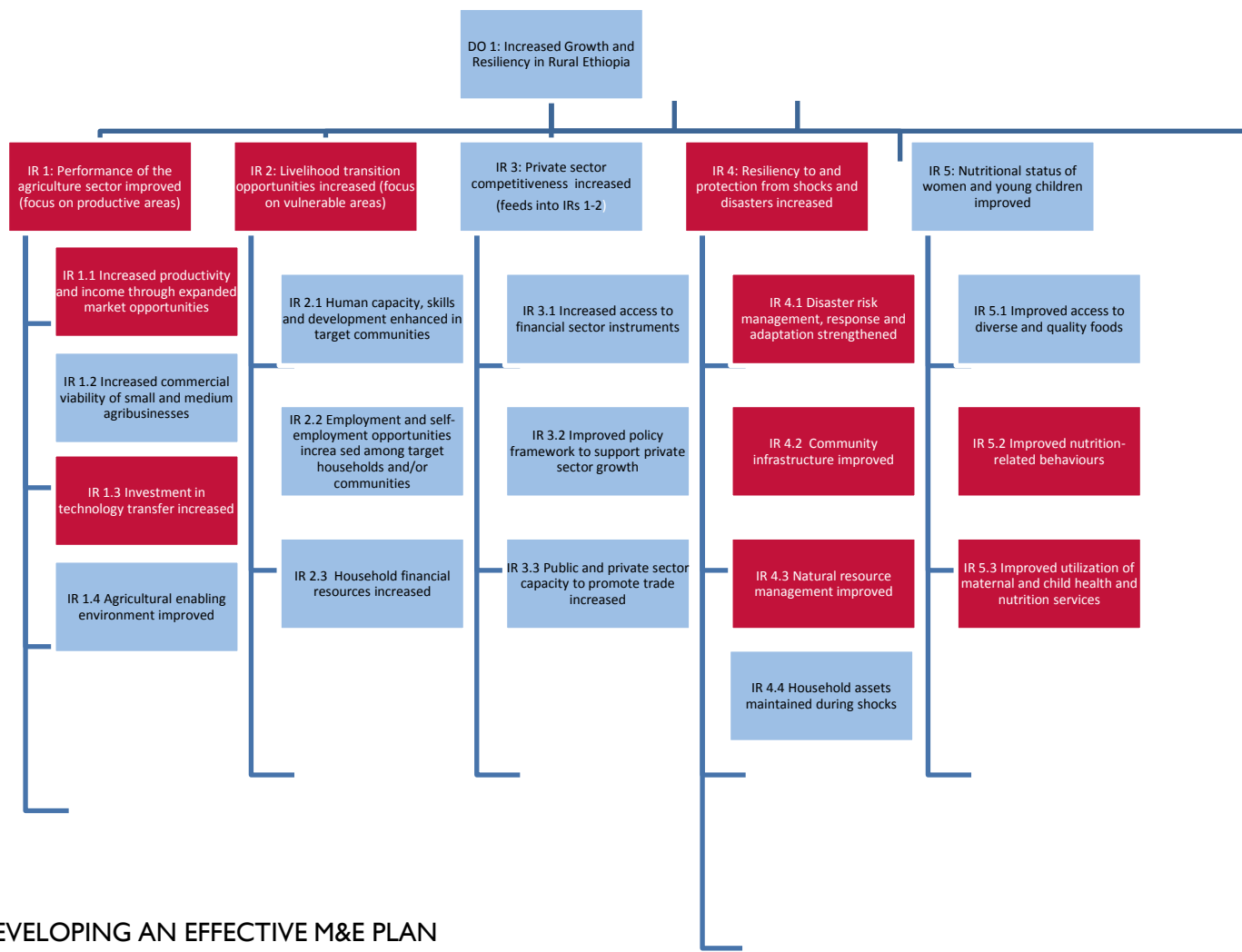
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Step 2: Develop Performance Indicators

- Review or develop indicators in a working session
- Brainstorm potential indicators, **including those that align with the Development Objective Results.**
- Assess potential indicators (use the standards to guide you)
- Select best indicators (try to choose about 3 per result)



Example: Prime Alignment with DO 1 RF





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Step 3: Identify Data Source, Collection Method and Timing

- Identify potential sources of data
- Identify approach for data collection
- Develop data collection tools
- Consider frequency for collection and reporting
- Assign a person, office or team to be responsible for data collection

Document in the M&E plan!



Step 4: Establish Baselines and Targets

- Establish baseline where possible. Either:
 - Baseline is 0
 - Baseline will need to be collected
 - Baseline is already available
- Target Setting

Use data tables to manage
and analyze data.



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Step 5: Collect Data and Verify Quality

- Collect data
- Identify any unanticipated problems and address them
- Build commitment to and capacity for quality



Step 6: Incorporate Other Assessing and Learning Activities

- Data analysis and use
- Performance reviews
- Evaluations and special studies
- Performance reporting



What Makes a Good M&E Plan?

- Strong internal logic
- Attention to detail (e.g. clarity and specificity in definitions)
- Viewing the process of data identification and collection as part of a larger management system
- Focus on what data are needed by decision-makers



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Maintaining the M&E System

- ✓ It's a living system-- it is important to review the M&E Plan periodically
 - As you implement the M&E plan, you will learn what works and what doesn't → this needs to be fed into the system
- ✓ Need to balance consistency vs. need for change



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Maintaining the M&E System – Triggers for Change

- ✓ Changes in project circumstances (e.g., new staff, new activities, changes in budget)
- ✓ Changes in external circumstances (e.g., new government programs)
- ✓ Changes to secondary data sources
- ✓ Learning from experience with PM system – what indicators do/do not work, which data are most helpful, etc.?



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Tools for PMP – M&E Plan Development

- No standard format is **required**
- PMP Formats Options– PIRS versus a matrix format
- Implementing Partners use Mission Level PMP & M&E Plan to firm up their own Activity Level M&E Plan.



Roles & Responsibilities

USAID DO Teams/ CORs/ AORs:

- Ensure effective PMP is set up for the DO
- **Approval the M&E plan for the project – E.g. IR2/4 Project (depends on the contract)**
- Ensure that project level M&E plan meets contract or agreement requirements and USAID PMP requirements
- Analyze performance data provided in project reports to inform management decision making



Roles & Responsibilities

Implementing Partners:

- Set up project M&E plan and associated systems
- Ensure contractual and USAID requirements are met
- Set up appropriate data collection and reporting systems
- Ensure data quality
- Flag issues and provide solutions at the project level
- Provide analysis of data
- Use data for internal management